

**Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 20, 2006, Via Teleconference
Chair: Karren Brown**

Attending: K. Brown, Board Chair (ALFL/LAMR), A. Miller, Board Member (WABA), C. Moos, Board Member (CAVO), B. Bingham, Board Member (IMR I+M), D. Perkins, Board Member (SOPN), G. Bowser, Advisory Board Member (GC-CESU), D. Ditmanson, Former Board Member (FY2005) (PECO), T. Benson (PECO), H. Sosinski (SOPN)

I. Updates since the annual meeting

- A. SAND bird report – Inventory was completed relatively inexpensively. The first draft report is now complete. D. Perkins requested and received a 1-2 page summary. This summary can have multiple potential uses (i.e. superintendent's summary, communication with local tribes)
- B. Vegetation mapping status
 - 1. Field work consisting of collecting plot data has been completed at LYJO, WABA, BEOL, SAND, FOUN, and FOLS. There is some work left to be done at CAVO and PECO that will be completed in FY2006. The plot data is being entered over the winter by SOPN and cooperators. When done, a multivariate statistical analysis will be completed to determine community types. These community types will then be used to construct a dichotomous key and for ground truthing (scheduled to begin this summer at several parks).
 - 2. Classification and mapping at LYJO, WABA, SAND, FOUN, CAVO, and FOLS has already been paid for and is ongoing through this winter and spring.
 - 3. FY06 New Funds – We have submitted a request for \$267,500 for vegetation mapping at SOPN parks this year. It would cover additional plot data collection at PECO and CAVO, accuracy assessments at LYJO, WABA, FOLS, BEOL, and SAND, and the initiation of, and plot data collection at CHIC. We also submitted a request for \$113,979 for vegetation mapping work in FY2007 and FY2008 if there were end of year funds.
 - 4. LAMR and ALFL should be complete this winter
- C. Inventory Status

1. We are moving forward on SAND's rare animal inventory. This is the only inventory currently scheduled for FY06. Proposals were received from Bureau of Reclamation and Colorado Natural Heritage Program. We have decided to accept CNHP's proposal because they are familiar with the rare plant species present in the area, have done work at SAND, and based on their proposals will conduct more field work. This inventory will be funded through NRPP Small Park funding source at no cost to SOPN.
2. R. Roath has completed his field work for the SAND plants inventory. We should be receiving a report this spring.
3. The Bureau of Reclamation has completed field work on wetland at BEOL. A report was due back in December. It is anticipated that it will soon be submitted.
4. We submitted a proposal and will receive funding from NRPP Small Parks to inventory the new lands at PECO. The proposed inventory is geared towards inventorying rare species, although we will record all species. We should receive funding (\$37,900) for this project in FY2008 and FY2009.
5. SOPN would like to submit multi-park bat proposal to Desert Southwest CESU. But we are currently not sure if the CESU will have a call at this time.

D. NPSpecies Certification

1. Vertebrate lists for all 11 SOPN parks were certified by the September 30 deadline.
2. Plant lists for most SOPN parks were certified by the September 30 deadline. Initially, we planned to certify plant datasets during FY06 and had stated this in our WASO approved workplan. However, a mandate was handed down to have all NPSpecies datasets certified by the end of FY05. All parks with the exception of CAVO, FOUN and FOLS were completed. The contractor reviewing the CAVO and FOUN datasets has just submitted their results 4 months after the due date. Certification for FOLS will begin once a contract is arranged. This dataset was left out of the September 30 deadline because the vegetation work at this park was conducted outside of the I&M program.

E. Communications Workshop Report

1. K. McMurry, A. Roberts, and T. Benson attended the IMR I+M Communication Workshop. K. McMurry is on a committee to continue the progress made at the workshop. The committee's purpose is to ensure that information gained from the I&M program is made available to park managers in

a useful format. D. Perkins asked T. Benson if he wished to add anything further. T. Benson stated that he felt that small and medium sized parks were underrepresented.

Additionally, the superintendents present were fairly new to their positions. There are currently plans for a follow up meeting geared towards park superintendents. D. Perkins said we were one of the best represented networks with three superintendents (A. Roberts, K. McMurry, and C. Moos) and one resource representative (T. Benson).

F. Phase I Report Status

1. The Phase I report was submitted and accepted. We have received some minor editorial comments. These comments will not necessitate a re-submittal of the report. Instead, they will be incorporated into the Phase II report, due October 1, 2006. SOPN will be bringing additional paper and CD copies to the Vital Signs Prioritization workshop at the end of January.

G. Annual Report and Workplan Status

1. SOPN's Annual Report and Draft Workplan was submitted and accepted. The final FY2006 Workplan was submitted to the Intermountain Regional office and the WASO office on January 20, 2006. We do not expect any problems with our submission.

H. Prairie Restoration Proposal Status

1. SOPN resubmitted the multi-park prairie restoration proposal for \$249,400 to NRPP-Disturbed Lands. The proposal has ranked high in the IMR and is being forwarded to WASO. P. Benjamin is our project shepherding. We will be working with her to revise our proposal for the WASO competition. If funded, work will occur in FY 2008 to 2010. The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center has agreed to be a major partner with this project. G. Bowser noted that the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center has joined the CESU. Since NRPP-Disturbed Lands has a lower limit, and because of the Wildflower Center's area of interest, this proposal only includes BEOL, SAND, LYJO, CHIC, and WABA. If funded, SOPN hopes to acquire additional funds in 2008 in order to bring in FOLS, LAMR, and CAVO.

II. Vital Signs Selection Process

A. Vital Signs Prioritization Workshop

1. D Perkins gave a summary of how SOPN will be ranking the list of potential vital signs. He started with a recap about the management significance scoring. Surveys were sent out to the Technical Committee in December. All the surveys have been received. To keep scoring transparent, all scores were based on a questionnaire with a specific list of criteria. Each park agreed or disagreed with the criteria, which then resulted in the management significance score for that park.
2. Prioritization will occur at the workshop held on January 24-25, 2006 in Amarillo, Texas. SOPN will pay for one person from each park to attend. Four breakout groups (Wildlife, Plants and Soils, Aquatic Resources, and Landscape, Air Quality and Other) will review a list of potential vital signs relevant to their group. On the first day, the groups will review and assign scores for Ecological Significance and Feasibility/Cost of Implementation. These scores are to be determined via a defined criteria set.
3. On the second day, the groups will discuss the top ranked items (top 25%) and determine if there are existing protocols or programs, and potential partnership opportunities.

B. Vital Signs Selection Workshop

1. The selection workshop will occur the following day (January 26, 2006) and will include the Technical Committee and SOPN staff only. This is to ensure that the final list is one that fits our parks and it also ensures that we follow FACA rules that prohibit government decisions being made by outside sources. The Technical Committee will have the opportunity to review the prioritized list from the prioritization workshop and tweak it as they see fit. The result will be a final list of vital signs that will be presented to the Board of Directors at a later date.
2. A. Miller stated that he would not be able to attend the prioritization workshop on January 24 and 25, and that it is likely that he may also miss the selection workshop on January 26.

C. Vital Signs Approval Meeting

1. The next step is to present the prioritized list to the Board of Directors. D. Perkins mentioned that he would like to do this in person and invite all SOPN superintendents. He suggested holding a meeting in late March or early April and is open for locations and dates. D. Perkins opened the floor for suggestions. K. Brown suggested Denver. D. Ditmanson suggested BEOL (La Junta, CO). **Action Item – D. Perkins will send out an email to the SOPN board and SOPN superintendents asking their preferences on several dates**

in March or early April, and whether they would prefer Bent's Old Fort NHS or Lakewood, CO. POST MEETING NOTE: this meeting will take place March 29 and will be hosted by Bent's Old Fort NHS.

III. FY 2006 Plans

- A. D. Perkins requested thought regarding the annual SOPN meeting and whether the Board still wants to hold an in-person meeting in August since we will have an in-person meeting in the Spring. **ACTION ITEM: The board decided to have a conference call in lieu of an in-person meeting. This meeting will likely take place this summer for the review of the annual report and workplan, and the Phase II Report.**
- B. D. Perkins provided a budget update. To date, SOPN is slated to full funding, which will consist of \$390,400 for vital signs monitoring, \$29,000 for water quality and \$20,000 for NRPP small park – SAND rare species inventory. This makes for a total of \$439,400. In addition, we have a request to the vegetation mapping program for \$267,500 for FY06 work and another \$113,979 for FY07 and FY08 work.
- C. The Phase II should be complete by early summer. The report is due on October 1, 2006, so this will put us several months ahead of schedule.
- D. We will be setting about \$40,000 to forward fund some protocol development work after we have a final vital signs list.